



**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
District of Maryland  
Northern Division*

*Allen F. Loucks  
United States Attorney*

*Vickie E. LeDuc  
Public Information Officer*

*36 South Charles Street  
Fourth Floor  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201*

*410-209-4800  
TTY/TDD: 410-962-4462  
410-209-4885  
FAX 410-962-3091  
Vickie.LeDuc@usdoj.gov*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:  
VICKIE E. LEDUC, AUSA  
(410) 209-4885**

**RICHARD SCHMIDT SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS IN FOREIGN SEX TRAVEL CASE**

**Baltimore**, Maryland – Assistant Attorney General Christopher A. Wray of the Criminal Division, Special Agent in Charge Cynthia J. O’Connell, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Baltimore Office and United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Allen F. Loucks announced that today U.S. District Court Judge Andre M. Davis sentenced Richard Arthur Schmidt, age 62, of Baltimore, Maryland to 15 years in prison followed by supervised release for life in connection with Schmidt’s July 8, 2004 guilty plea to one count of traveling overseas to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a minor; and one count of traveling overseas and engaging in illicit sexual conduct with a minor. The offenses to which Schmidt pleaded guilty involved the sexual molestation of a minor teenage boy in Cambodia in December of 2003.

According to an affidavit in support of an application for his arrest, Schmidt, a former Baltimore school teacher, is a U.S. citizen on parole in Maryland. On three previous occasions, Schmidt had been convicted in Maryland state courts of crimes relating to the sexual molestation of minors. In 1987, Schmidt was sentenced in Baltimore City Circuit Court to 18 years in prison for multiple sexual offenses, which stemmed from his sexual involvement with minor boys. He was released on parole in 2000 after serving 13 years of the sentence. In May 2002, Maryland parole

authorities issued an arrest warrant for Schmidt after receiving information that Schmidt had been associating with a minor male in violation of the terms of his parole. Schmidt left Maryland and flew to the Philippines, arriving there in the first week of June 2002.

According to the statement of facts submitted in support of Schmidt's guilty plea, in December of 2003, Schmidt traveled from the Philippines to Cambodia. On December 27<sup>th</sup>, he engaged in illicit sexual conduct with a 13 year old boy. Cambodian National Police Officers arrested Schmidt that day.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents learned of Schmidt's December 27<sup>th</sup> arrest and that he had been charged in both the Philippines and Cambodia for other crimes stemming from the sexual molestation of minors in those countries. Schmidt's other charge in Cambodia stemmed from sexual contact with two minors occurring a few days before committing the offense that was the subject of the guilty plea. He was held in custody in Cambodia until his deportation to the United States on February 18, 2004.

The crimes with which Schmidt were charged were passed into law on April 30, 2003 as part of the PROTECT Act. It is believed that this case is the first unconditional plea to these new crimes – the defendant waived his right to appeal.

"The Schmidt case illustrates the Attorney General's commitment to bring these predators to justice, wherever they might be," said Assistant Attorney General Christopher A. Wray of the Criminal Division. "Using the PROTECT Act, and tapping into the varied resources of the Department, including experts in international extraditions, we left no stone unturned in our efforts to ensure that Richard Schmidt will no longer pose a threat to children in our communities or in communities abroad."

United States Attorney Loucks stated that “Child sex exploitation is a global problem in which countless children fall victim to sexual predators. We are working closely with ICE, the FBI and foreign governments to safeguard children from sexual exploitation. As a result of these efforts, our Office has returned 33 child sex exploitation indictments since January of 2002, of which 23 defendants have pled guilty and 2 defendants have been convicted at trial. These convictions should send a message that federal law enforcement officials are committed to protecting children from sexual predators and intend to aggressively investigate and prosecute these crimes.”

“ICE’s Operation Predator has netted more than 5,750 child predators worldwide through the application of tools such as the PROTECT Act and through partnerships with other law enforcement” said Special Agent in Charge O’Connell. “When wielded, these hammers are very powerful against exploiters and serial predators like Richard Schmidt who go overseas to abuse children.”

This case was investigated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Diplomatic Security Service of the Department of State, the Cambodian National Police and the Australian Federal Police. The Office of International Affairs of the Department of Justice’s Criminal Division was instrumental in securing the return of Mr. Schmidt from Cambodia to face these charges. The Criminal Division also assisted in the investigation and prosecution through its Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Andrew Norman and Michael Hanlon.